

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2424

As Reported by House Committee On:
Juvenile Justice & Family Law

Title: An act relating to solemnizing marriages.

Brief Description: Authorizing elected officials to solemnize marriages.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Chase and Upthegrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Juvenile Justice & Family Law: 1/29/04, 2/3/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes elected officials in the executive or legislative branch of state, county or municipal government to perform marriage ceremonies.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY LAW

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Pettigrew, Vice Chair; Lovick and Upthegrove.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell and Hinkle.

Staff: Trudes Tango Hutcheson (786-7384).

Background:

State law authorizes the following persons, whether active or retired, to perform marriage ceremonies:

- licensed or ordained ministers;
- priests;
- Supreme Court justices;
- judges of the court of appeals;
- superior court judges; and
- judges of district and municipal courts.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Elected officials, whether active or retired, in the executive or legislative branch of state, county, or municipal government may perform marriage ceremonies.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes a technical correction to amend a section inadvertently omitted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This makes government more accessible to its citizens. It gives an elected official the opportunity to be helpful in the community. Many other states, like California and Utah, allow their elected officials to do this. People getting married want someone they know to preside over the ceremony. This will be helpful to people in rural areas.

Testimony Against: The divorce rates are increasing and divorce costs the state money. The Legislature should not make it easier for people to get married. People are more accountable to clergies and judges. Clergy often require pre-marital counseling. Judges see first-hand the direct effects of divorce.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor; and Mayor Steven Mullet, City of Tukwila.

(Opposed) Larry Kvamme.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.